

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 11, and 19 are independent claims. Claims 2-10, 12-18, and 20-26 are dependent claims.

Claims 1-9, 11-17, and 19-25 have been rejected. The Examiner has objected to claims 10, 18, and 26. Amendments to claims 1, 3, 4, and 8-26 are presented herein. Claims 10, 18, and 26 have been rewritten in independent form. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Objections to the Claims

In numbered paragraph 7 on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 10, 18, and 26 as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants have rewritten claims 10, 18, and 26 in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to claims 10, 18, and 26.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

In numbered paragraph 3 on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9 and 11-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by McMillin (U.S. Patent No. 5,103,490). Also, in numbered paragraph 6 on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 19-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McMillin. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons presented below.

The Examiner indicated in numbered paragraphs 7 and 8 on page 4 of the Office Action that dependent claims 10, 18, and 26 contain allowable subject matter. Features of claims 10, 18, and 26 have been added respectively to independent claims 1, 11, and 19. Thus, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 11, and 19 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Dependent claims 2-9, 12-17, and 20-25 depend respectively from independent claims 1, 11, and 19 and, thus, should be patentable over the prior art.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 1-26 patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under §§ 102 and 103.

Request for Return of Form PTO-1449

On June 7, 2000, Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement with a Form PTO-1449. A copy of this form has not yet been returned to Applicants to confirm that the references cited therein have been considered. Accordingly, it is requested that the Examiner confirm consideration of these references by initialing and returning this 1449 form. For the Examiner's convenience, copies of the IDS, the 1449 form, the references, and the stamped postcard are attached to this response.

Conclusion

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted to be in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

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Finally, if there are any additional fees associated with filing of this response, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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